

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 15 and 17 to 23 are pending in this application.

The Objection to the Claims

Claim 16 is objected to for being of improper dependent form. Claim 16 is cancelled herein, thereby obviating the objection.

The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. In particular, claim 1 recites the limitation “the outer surfaces” without proper antecedent basis. It is respectfully submitted that this informality has been cured by amendment herein. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

The Rejection(s) Under Prior Art

1. Claims 1-10 and 12-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by WO 93/12372 (“Lindsay et al.”). Lindsay et al. is directed to clamps for extending legs and discloses a clamp (16) having a base (22) for mounting on one part (17) of a leg and a pair of resilient C-shaped clamping jaws (30) mounted on the base for receiving leg members (15). A clamping member (34, 35) is mounted on the base to close the C-shaped clamping jaws on the leg members.

2. Claims 1, 8 and 11 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,942,187 (“Blackburn”). Blackburn is directed to a tripod with adjustable leg assemblies, each assembly having multiple leg units (13, 14, 15) which are slidable relative to each other. A fixing clamp having actuating levers 23 and 24 is provided to lock the leg units into a fixed relative position.

In response to both of the above rejections the claims are amended herein to more clearly delineate the invention. In particular, claim 1 is amended to recite, *inter alia*, that the at least one clamping engagement element (5) which is biased into engagement with the outer surfaces of the inner tubes (2) in response to loading of the multiple telescopic tube in a longitudinal clamping direction. For support for this recitation and a fuller explanation thereof, the Examiner’s attention is drawn to Applicant’s specification at page 3, line 1 to page 5, line 6. Various other amendments are made to the dependent claims for purposes of clarification. Support for these amendments may be found in the claims as originally filed and throughout the specification.

The devices disclosed in the cited prior art references are substantially different from the present invention. One of the chief features of the present invention is the fact that the clamping device (3) responds to the direction of loading so that the inner tubes (2) are prevented from moving in one direction, but remain freely movable in the opposite direction, depending upon the direction of loading. Thus, with compression loading, the inner tubes (2) are prevented from sliding back towards the outer tubes (1), but may be extended outward to lengthen the telescopic tube assembly without manipulating the clamping device (3). Conversely, when the loading is tension loading - for example, when it is used to suspend equipment from a support structure

from above - the inner tubes (2) are prevented from sliding away from the outer tubes (1), but can be freely moved back towards the outer tubes (1) to shorten the telescopic tube assembly without further manipulation of the clamping device.

Neither of the cited references discloses a clamping device which is responsive to the loading of the leg assemblies. Rather, some type of clamping member (rotary member 35 in Lindsay et al.; lever 23, 24 in Blackburn) is required to be manually actuated to lock and unlock the clamping device. These devices are more cumbersome to operate and are clearly different from the invention herein.

In view of the above, claim 1 and all claims depending therefrom are submitted to be allowable over the cited prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

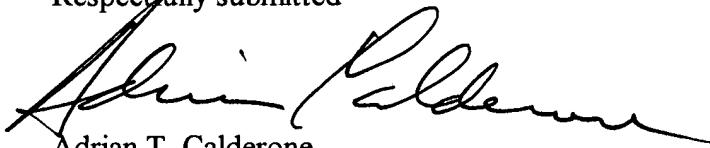
The New Claims:

New claims 21 to 23 are added herein. New claim 21 is an independent claim directed to the multiple telescopic tube assembly. Claims 22 and 23 depend from claim 21. Support for these claims can be found in the specification, for example, at pages 10 and 11.

CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons stated above all of the pending claims are submitted to be in condition for allowance, the same being respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted



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